

Thursday, September 9, 1965

OLDE DUXBOROUGH

In the year 1867 a small schooner called the *Christiana L.*, was built in Duxbury. She was of 42 tons and 67 feet long. The U.S. List of Merchant Vessels of 1891 shows that she had been sold to Jacksonville, Florida, but just before she was sold south she sailed with a crew of Duxbury men. In the winter she made some voyages to the Chesapeake for corn, perhaps oysters, and in summer it was fishing in the north.

Her skipper was Orson Arnold, who, at least later, lived in the Kennard house at Harrison and Washington streets. Sailing with him was L. B. "Win" Goodspeed, Cassius Hunt, perhaps Calvin Winsor and Charles Grueby (from whom I got this data). The cook was Jabez Hatch, who later ran the blacksmith shop immediately south of Josselyn's store. He lived in the Charley McNaught house. Around 1897 "Jaby" Hatch was the champion smelt fisherman of Duxbury. It is not believed that this unusual gift as a smelter was due to his working with iron.

The association of these men in the *Christiana L.*, led to strong lifelong friendships and pointed the way for several to their life's work on T Wharf in Boston. Among other L. B. Goodspeed & Co., C. Hunt & Co. and Arnold and Winsor were highly respected and prominent firms in the business. Also with them were the Grueby "boys" George and Sam, as well as Leonard "Lenny" Parker, probably others.

All these men were very progressive in improving the types of fishing schooners. I was in the office of the Duxbury Coal & Lumber Co., when Sanford Winsor, son of Calvin and partner of Arnold & Winsor, gave the order by phone to James and Tarr of Essex for the construc-

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tion of the newly designed schooner *Mattakeset*. She was the fore-runner of more, fast, able and handsome. One distinctive feature was a stem that dropped almost vertically then, before it reached the waterline, took a sharp curve aft. Those schooners of this design became widely known as Indian Heads, partly, no doubt, due to their names. The *Mattakeset* was followed by the *Massasoit*, the *Samoset*, *Tecumseh* and later by two big Grand Bankers called the *Moonam* and the *Moween*. They all, perhaps more, hailed from Duxbury around the turn of the century.

No doubt there are people in town who can add to these fragmentary memories of an interesting maritime activity of Duxbury men.

If the editor has some space to waste on a bit of trivia he might let me tell what some people have thought is an amusing story connected with the *Moween*. I was the instructor in the Shipping Board's Navigation School on Atlantic Avenue and one day in 1920 was walking with one of my "students", Captain Houghton, a State of Maine man. As we passed T Wharf he was saying, "I hear you come from Duxbury." I affirmed the fact.

"Whenever I think of T Wharf, Duxbury and a schooner called the *Moween* come to mind," he continued and spun this yarn:

"I had finished high school and was having too good a time to

settle down to a job when fall came. One of my home chores was to fill the big wood box every night. Coming home one evening just before supper I had failed to bring in the wood. Mother and sisters were setting the table and father as always was sitting in his chair by the stove reading his paper.

"Where's the wood?" he roared without dropping his paper. Mother gave me a sympathetic and understanding smile as I went out

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and slammed the door. Coming to the wood pile a feeling of resentment swept over me and I never stopped--kept right on to town. There I found the Boston boat about to sail and aboard her a friend stowed me away.

Atlantic Avenue was drizzling and cold the next morning and I was hungry as I drifted down on T Wharf. There was a crowd at the cap log gazing admiringly at a large new schooner. I looked at the stern and saw that she was the *Moween* of Duxbury. Hunger often forces unnatural boldness and that morning it led me to brace up to the skipper and ask for a berth. Having been used to dory work and some fishing he listened and for some reason took me on, sending me aboard to the warm galley for something to eat. Winter trawling on the Grand Banks was rough, tough work and when we returned I decided to ship out square-rig for warmer climates.

"Some four years later and after I had seen a lot of the world, I got homestuck for mother and headed for Maine. As I approached the house in the twilight, there was the woodpile. I loaded my arms and pushed open the door. Mother putting on the supper, screamed happily, the girls rushed to me. Father in his chair with his paper never lowered it as I dumped the wood in the box.

"There's your wood, father," I announced. And behind the sheet he grumbled, "You've been a damn long time getting it."